

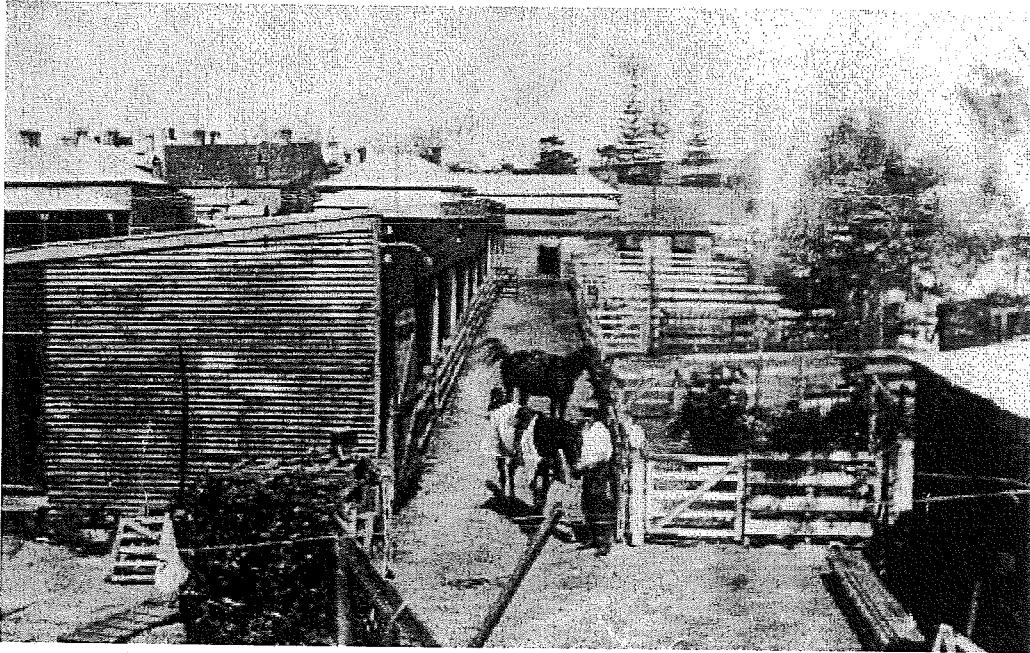
FREMANTLE HISTORY SOCIETY

Established 1994

The Secretary, 24 Fothergill Street,
FREMANTLE WA 6160

**Autumn Edition
2003**

Editors: Ron Davidson, Anne Brake



Stables came in all shapes and sizes in Fremantle. 57 Quarry St, c. 1936
Fremantle Local History Collection 1897

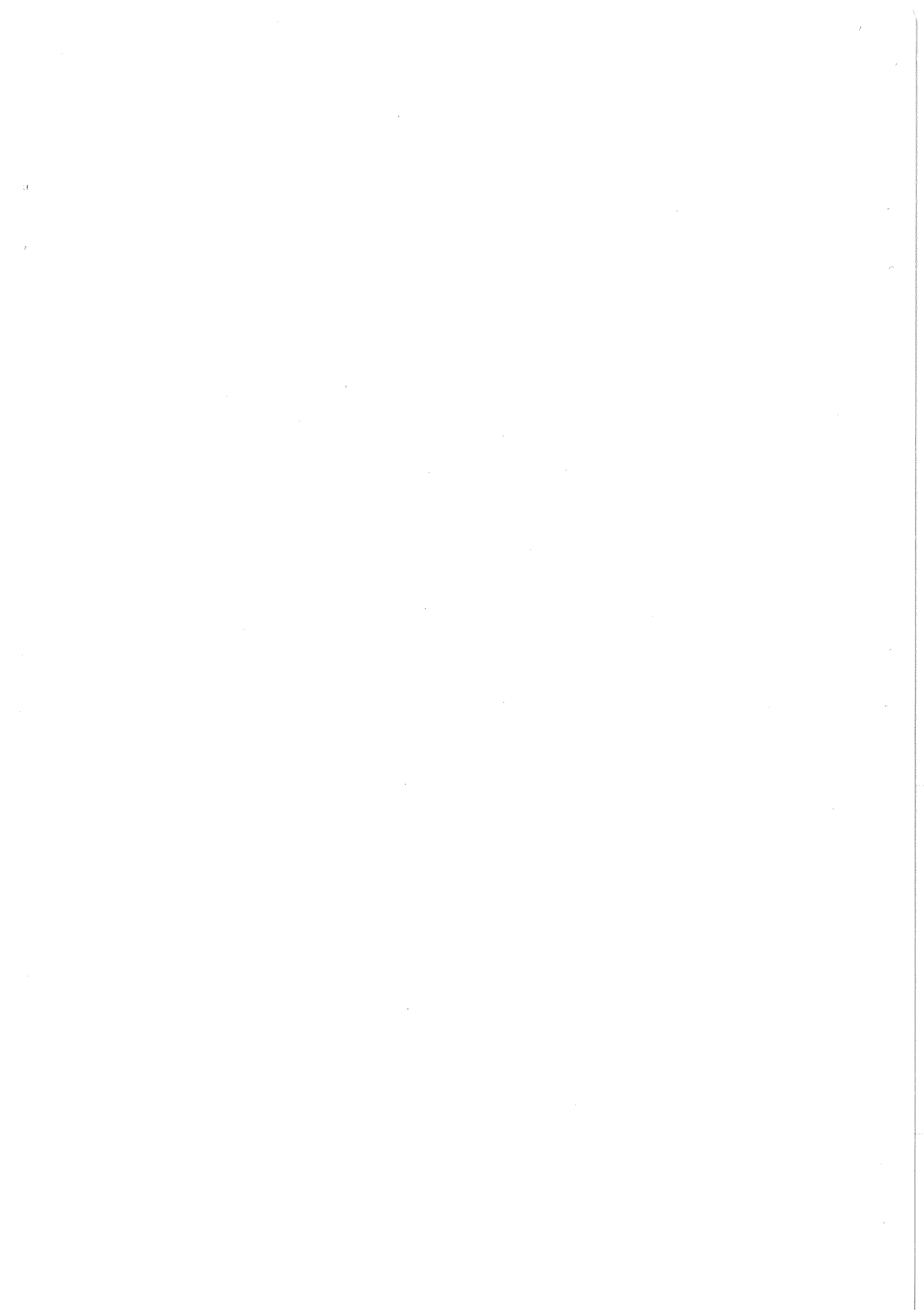
FREMANTLE LINKS TO A RACING DYNASTY

Rusty Christensen

The story of recent generations of the Oliver family is well known. It is now well documented that the boys, Damien and Jason, lost their father Ray in a tragic race fall at Kalgoorlie in 1975. And that in one week in November 2002 Jason was killed in a tragic fall at training and Damien rode the Melbourne Cup winner, Media Puzzle. What few contemporary racing regulars know is that the boys' paternal grandfather, Gerry, was also a hoop with a strong Fremantle connection. He was apprenticed to the late Tom Lippiat who in the twenties and thirties raced a successful team of gallopers from stables in Onslow Street and Chudleigh Streets in Fremantle East, as the area was then known.

Lippiat's stables complex, where he lived with his family, was named Threania after one of his stable's stars who no doubt contributed towards the purchase of the property. This was only one of the many stables in the area housing gallopers, trotters and work horses, at a time of few council building regulations.

By the 1920s Lippiat had established his stables in Chudleigh Street with yards, and stalls with gear and feed storage attached. It was a time when stable workers had little status or access to protective representation and the majority accepted their lot as they had grown up in an era of every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.



Gerry Oliver was no exception to the norm. As a 'live in' stable hand he did in fact live in the chaff or feed house. He slept in an iron-framed bed with a wire mesh base and folding legs, and did some cooking over an open fireplace on which he also prepared warm feeds for his charges. It was not an easy life and compared with conditions enjoyed today by stable staff it was verging on slave labour. But then these were hard times and the dedicated horsemen accepted the conditions for the sake of a job and their calling.

Gerry Oliver was a friendly garrulous fellow and I can well remember him leaning over the iron gate in Chudleigh Street exchanging banter with the locals - including me. One morning, while on an errand to the corner shop in Forrest Street to purchase a packet of Vita Brits at age four or five, I was asked by this chirpy chap what I had bought. I replied 'Vita Brits'. From then on that was what Gerry called me.

My elder sister was a vivacious teenager and at times would talk with the obviously lonely apprentice over the fence behind the brick lavatory which was on the fence line between the two properties until our mother discovered them chatting. She had grown up with horses and jockeys, her father had traded in horses and cattle and her five younger brothers had been horse breakers. With this background it was little wonder that when she happened upon her daughter conversing with a stable boy she really flew off the handle and made it known in no uncertain manner that such meetings had to cease.

As the financial depression bit deeper Tom Lippiat reduced his team and gradually returned to his smaller Onslow Street stables. Gerry Oliver went back to his home town Kalgoorlie after World War 2 where he established himself as a horseman on the Goldfields and other tracks in the country and the northern areas of W.A.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Executive:

Bob Woollett (President)	9335 7451
Kristy Bizzaca (Vice President)	9361 9915
Beres Coley (Treasurer)	9335 9473
Ron Davidson (Secretary)	9430 6096
Ken Hopkins (Minutes Secretary)	9339 1865

Committee:

Elaine Berry	9336 1906
Anne Brake	9336 5206
Jean Cecil	9335 2352
David Hutchison	9335 1594
Alan Kelsall	9336 4573
Alison Gregg	9298 9442
Lisa Williams (wk hrs)	9430 7966

Fremantle History Society's committee meets the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

If you have something you would like discussed at a meeting, please contact one of the members at the numbers shown above.

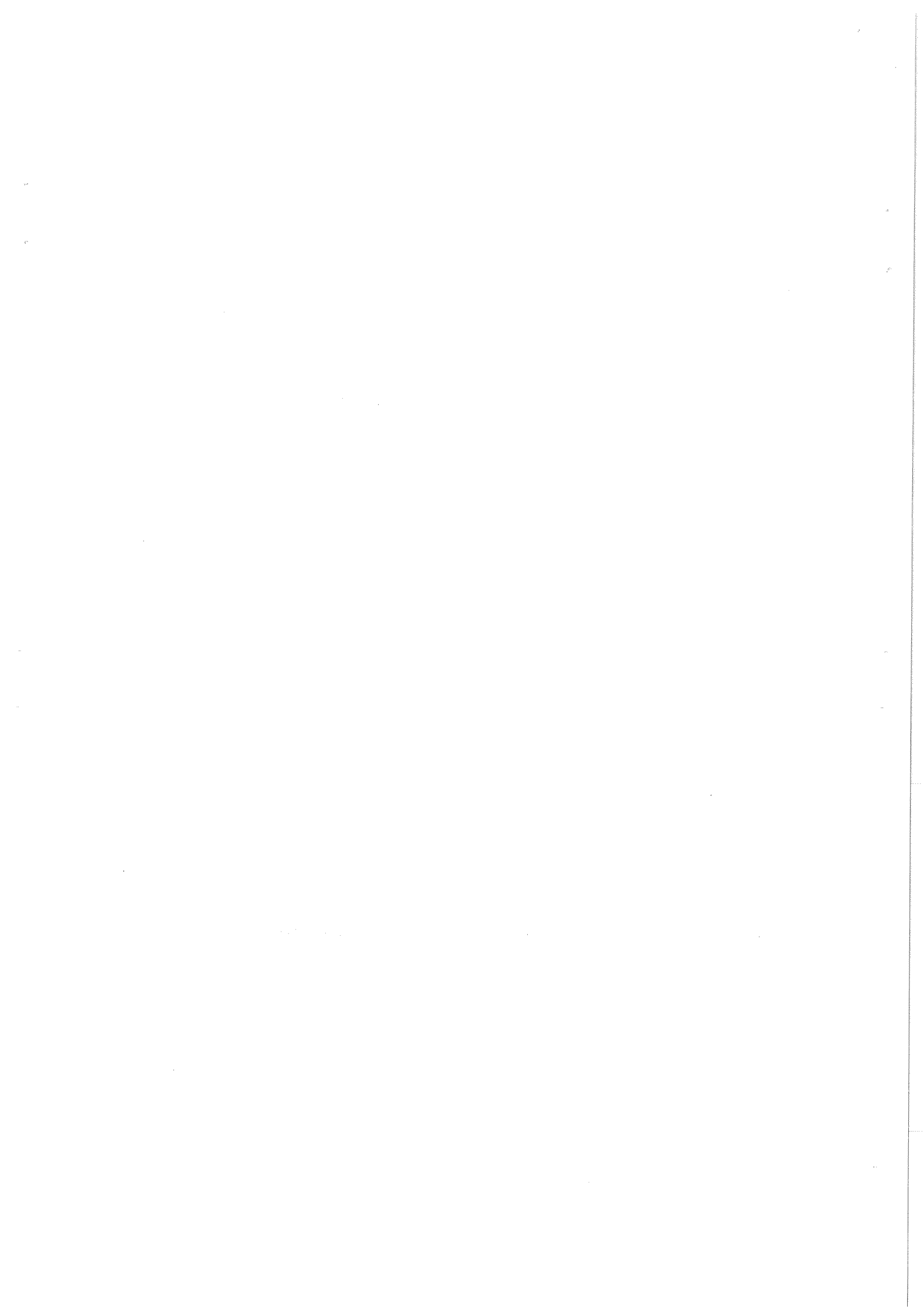
General meetings of the Society are generally held on the 4th Tuesday of the month. Details of these meetings can be found in your newsletter and reminders are placed in the local press. As we have started to have Sunday afternoon meetings occasionally, please be sure to check details.



COMING EVENTS

SOUND AND LIGHT TECHNOLOGY

Do you remember a time before television when the old wireless or gramophone was the family's main form of entertainment? Then come along to our May meeting, which is also a Fremantle Festival event, and listen to Richard Rennie who has worked with the Fremantle History Museum to develop a fascinating exhibition on the history of sound and light technology.



The exhibition includes the people who manufactured and sold wireless and gramophones in WA during the 1st half of the 20th century. You will also have the opportunity to listen to some of the earliest recordings made in WA - rare recordings including those of Sir Charles Court. You will also learn of the mystique of the mulgaphone, the story of Billy Edwards Music Company Emac Gramophones and much more. Many historic artifacts will be used to demonstrate and tell these stories.

Tuesday 27 May at 6pm (note the early start) at the **Fremantle History Museum**.

FREMANTLE PILOTS

In the early 1900s, the Fremantle Harbour Trust (now Fremantle Ports) was called upon to provide residential accommodation for pilots who had recently been transferred to Fremantle due to the closure of the Rottne Island Pilot Station. This was so pilots could co-ordinate the movement of ships coming in and out of the harbour.

Captain Vince Nolan will provide us with a fascinating insight into the trials and tribulations of the work of those pilots.

24 June at 7pm at Maritime Museum meeting room, Cliff St.

AGM

FREMANTLE BOYS (FMR) – FTI

This year's AGM will be held at the Film and Television Institute, formerly Fremantle Boys. Heritage architect Phil Griffiths, author of the conservation plan for the place, will be talking about the history of the development of the building and its use.

We have also organised to take advantage of the facilities and will show a short historic film about Fremantle to be followed by drinks and nibbles.

Come and join us at the **FTI, Adelaide St, 7pm, 22 July**.

Subscriptions to the Fremantle History Society are due as of the July meeting. You can pay them at the AGM or post the attached form with your cheque or money order to 24 Fothergill St, Fremantle 6160.

MEETING REPORTS

SUNDOWNER AT ARTHUR HEAD

Some of our members thought they knew all there was to know about the Arthur Head area. But our general meeting for February showed how wrong they were. Elaine Berry told us of many interesting people and things. There was the problem of disposing of the bodies of those who had died of the plague at the turn of the century, the search for a suitable death house and the eccentricities of some of those living in the pilot house. Of interesting buildings lost and saved, and the sad story of the execution of James Gavin. There seemed to be a story under every stone in the Arthur Head area.

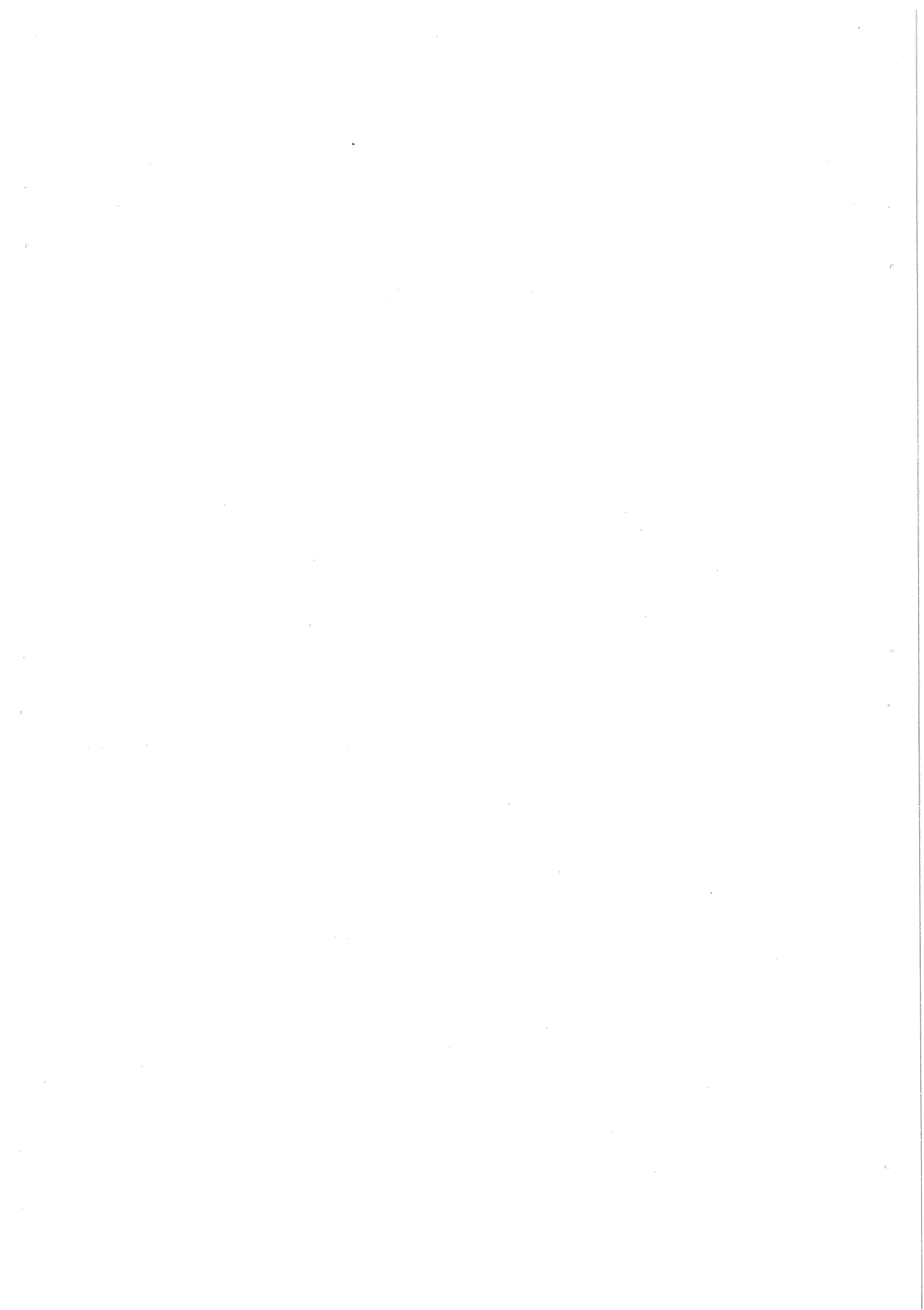
VISIT TO THE (NEW) MARITIME MUSEUM

The 12 people who came to the March general meeting of the History Society were able to escape the day's blustery conditions by exploring the new Maritime Museum with guide and Society member, Michael Seats.

Those who came were given an informative tour of the Museum's exhibitions together with Michael's insight about how the collections were put together. Many of the members took the opportunity to become 'Boarding Pass' members (pay a little extra and return as many times as you wish for a year) and look forward to returning to visit this fantastic museum!

THE ITALIAN STORY WITH JOHN MINERVINI

Over 40 members and friends attended the meeting held at the WA Maritime Museum Education Centre on Tuesday 29 April 2003 to hear John Minervini's talk on his recollections of growing up in Fremantle and



the development and integration of Italian culture in the City.

John took members and friends down memory lane to recall the migration of Italians to Fremantle, learning English, of the development of the lobster fishing industry and his election as the first Italian to be a City of Fremantle councilor. A willingness to answer questions following the address covering the controversial subject "internment" concluded the evening.



THE FREMANTLE HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2003

Many of our members may not be aware of this but for some years the Fremantle History Society has been involved in the planning of the annual City of Fremantle Heritage Festival as well as contributing to the events held during the week-long Festival. 2003 has been no different with two of the History Society's Committee members, Kristy Bizzaca and Ron Davidson, rejoining the Festival Committee for yet another year.

This year's Fremantle Heritage Festival runs from 31 May 2003 to the 6 June 2003. Look out for Festival programs and the *Fremantle Herald* wrap.

We encourage you all to be a part of promoting Fremantle's wonderful cultural heritage.



FESTIVAL EVENTS

Details on the Fremantle Heritage Festival events developed by the Fremantle History Society.

PHILLIMORE STREET TOUR

The Fremantle History Society invites people to join a tour of Fremantle's Historic Phillimore Street, which developed as the Port's primary maritime business area from the 1890's to the 1920's. The tour will look

at the street's history and architecture as well as taking a peek into some of the shipping office buildings themselves. Numbers are limited so please reserve a spot.

**Meet - cnr Cliff and Phillimore Streets
Saturday 31 May**

10.30am – 12noon

Free Event

Bookings/enquiries 9361 9915

THOSE EMPTY SPACES

Ever wondered what was located at the corner of Queen and Adelaide Streets before Target was built? Or on the Myer/Queensgate site? The Fremantle Local History Collection and the Fremantle History Society have prepared interpretation, in the form of photographs and historical information, telling the stories of some of Fremantle's infamous development sites.

Historian and Vice President of the Fremantle Society, Kristy Bizzaca, will present a brief introduction to the display on 3 June at 10.30am at the Local History Collection. Display will be open from 3 – 6 June 2003.

Talk - 10.30am, Tuesday 3 June

Display - 9.30am – 5pm, 3 to 6 June

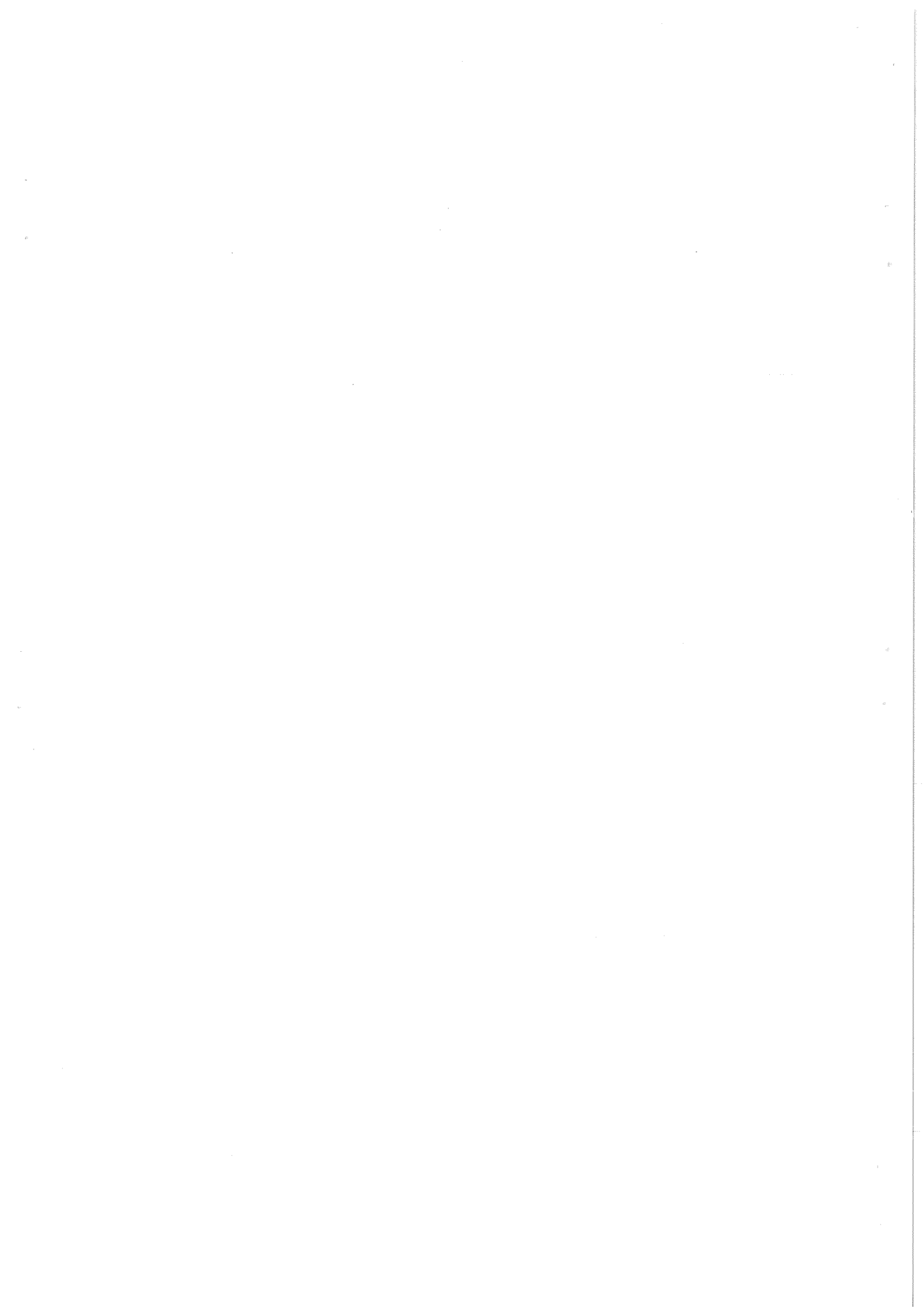
Local History Collection - Fremantle City Library

Free Event

Enquiries 9432 9739

A STROLL IN FOTHERGILL ST PRECINCT

The History Society, in conjunction with the Fremantle Society presents a walk around Fothergill St between Swanbourne and Solomon Streets on Sunday 1 June from 11 am to 12 noon. This precinct is being considered by the Heritage Council of WA for registration. Almost all of the buildings were constructed between 1900 and 1905 and incorporate a coherent mixture of brick and limestone, which has become known as the Fremantle style. The precinct includes a variety of houses from the very grand to



worker's cottages. Before and after photos and stories of the people and places will enrich the walk.

**Meet – cnr Swanbourne & Fothergill Sts
Sunday 1 June at 11.00 am**

Free event

Enquiries 9430 6096



THE JOKE WAS ON THE *HERALD*

The *Fremantle Herald* was established in 1867, and for many years it was regarded as the leading organ of public opinion in the colony. It was founded by James Pearce and William Beresford, associated with whom were James Roe and AHK Cole. Beresford had at one time been Anglican Dean at Cork and Roe had been an Anglican clergyman. The ripe scholarship of those two men, combined with the journalistic skills of Pearce and Cole, placed the paper in a leading position. Beresford's scholarly articles, together with his clever pungent facetia under the heading of 'Chips of a Sandalwood Cutter' were the sensation of the time, making the *Herald* a power in the land and a paper to be conjured with. The *Herald* always advocated a progressive policy and persistently stressed the need for harbour works in Fremantle, the construction of railways and the introduction of responsible government.

An incident in the early history of the *Herald* is worth recalling. In one of its earlier issues some miscreant, actuated by a desire to bring about the downfall of the paper, secured the insertion of some original poetry. The metrical composition of it was of a high order of merit, but both the editor and the printer failed to notice it was an acrostic, the first letters of the lines, read downwards, formed a sentence of an obscene nature. That was detected by an early morning reader (DB Franciso) who at once apprised the editor who took prompt measures to collect the papers, and those who did not notice the sinister nature of the poem made all sorts of conjectures as to why the paper was called in. Some ascribed the editor's action to a fear on his part that some

criticism of Governor Hampton's methods of dealing with the notorious bushranger, Moondyne Joe, by confining him to an iron cage, might lead to trouble. Eventually the secret leaked out, and when it did there were there were some who would have given a pretty good price for a copy of that particular issue of the *Herald*.

From *The History of Fremantle* (1929) by JK Hitchcock. The current *Herald* began in 1989.



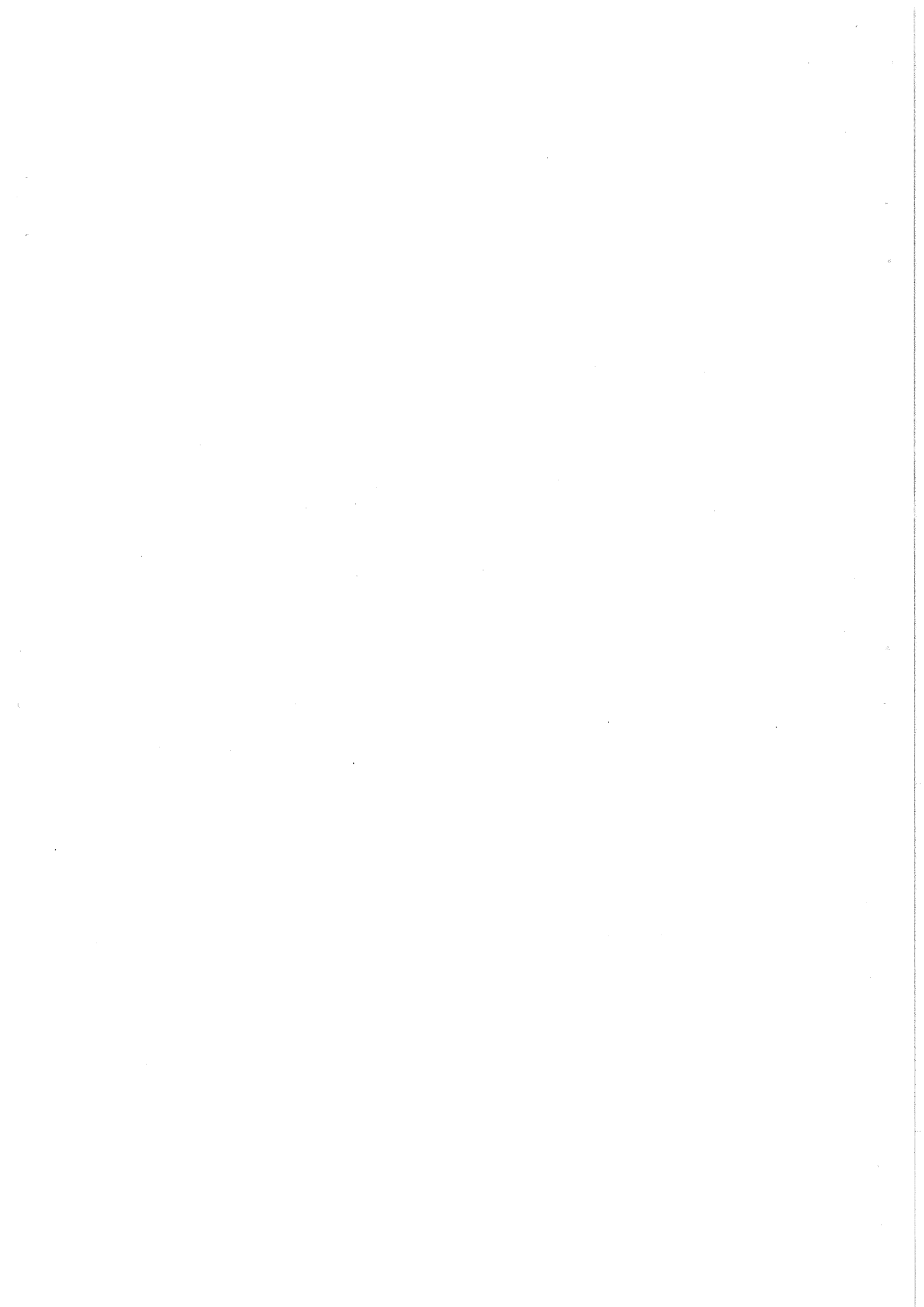
RICH PROGRAM FOR HISTORY CONFERENCE

The Eastern Goldfields Historical Society is hosting the 2003 State History Conference from September 26-28. The conference venue will be the Western Mining Conference Centre in MacDonald Street, Kalgoorlie. The theme will be *Water More Precious Than Gold*, which celebrates the arrival on the goldfields of water from Mundaring. The host society will honour the memories of its historical region.

Two important historical trails have been launched in the past few months, which will allow delegates to savour the Goldfields' history. Those driving from Perth can follow the Golden Pipeline Trail which starts at Mundaring Weir and ends at Mt Charlotte in Kalgoorlie. The trail was launched on 24 January 2003, the centenary of the opening of the original scheme by Sir John Forrest. The ghost of Sir John Forrest made a surprise visit to this year's celebrations!

The second trail, the Golden Quest Discovery Trail, which was launched in late March, will be featured on the 'bush bus tour' on Sunday, September 28.

The conference program will consist of three separate events. On Friday, September 26, there will be a civic reception at the magnificent Kalgoorlie Town Hall built in 1908. The Goldfields Brass Band, which is even older, will play for guests in the banquet hall. The conference itself will be held on Saturday 27 at the WMC Conference Centre. There will be three



guest speakers with close attachments to the Goldfields. Afterwards the conference dinner will take place at the striking Palace Hotel. On the Sunday the 'bush bus' will visit Kununalling, Comet Vale where the celebrated Varischetti rescue took place, and the graves at lonely Goongarrie. The coach will stop at the Ora Banda Inn where lunch will be hosted by the new owners Anne and Barry Foote. It is hoped the wildflowers will be still in full bloom.

If you have any questions about accommodation you can contact the Kalgoorlie-Boulder Visitor Centre on free call 1800 00 4653.

The EGHS secretary, Sue Worth, can be contacted on 08 9091 7020 or by email, worthskal@bigpond.com



WIN FOR FREMANTLE SOCIETY

The Fremantle City Council has allocated \$1500 from its precinct discretionary fund to make historic photos held in its collection more accessible to the public.

A selection of photographs from the Fremantle Society's photos are lodged in the Fremantle Local History Collection and the money will be used to scan a collection them. They will then be made available over the internet via the new Fremantle Society website which is currently being set up in conjunction with the National Trust.

Society president, John Dowson, has devoted considerable time to the collection of these photos and this project is a real coup for him. Congratulations, John.



MEMORIES FROM CONNIE

Just before she died last December, our much-loved member Connie Herbert passed on some writings based on her memories of Fremantle. This is one extract on her "smell" memories:

The smell of freesias, boronia and carbide is another strong memory of my early life in Fremantle. Freesias grew wild and in profusion in every backyard and on every road verge. Their perfume in the early morning told us that it would soon be Royal Show time. And all through September we could buy bunches of boronia from an Aboriginal man who stood outside Pellew's, Charlie Carter's and Fisher Beard's.

But the smell of carbide is, in more ways than one, my strongest smell memory of Fremantle. This came from the smell of the lamp our neighbour used to carry to work. I don't know where he worked, but every afternoon he would walk down the narrow laneway which separated our house from his- dunnyman's lane.

I was fascinated by this lamp with the funny smell and was always there at the front gate to say 'Hello, Mr Nugent' and take a deep sniff. And, although I was only four years old, he used to tip his tweed cap and reply 'Hello, young lady'. I knew that tipping hats was a good-mannered thing to do - my father always did it - but no one had ever tipped a hat to me before. I felt very important. Even now when I catch a whiff of carbide it conjures up a picture of a lamp that belongs in a fairy tale, a man in a tweed cap and a weatherboard house in Fremantle.



FREMANTLE CEMETERY: WATCH THIS SPACE

The Fremantle History Society has long been interested in stories from the grave. Or at least from cemeteries in Fremantle. One of our first displays was sited on the old Alma Street Cemetery which received bodies from the early 1830s. A little later general meetings involved a walk through the historic Fremantle Cemetery. The media thought that was a great joke but one of our biggest crowds turned up, despite the threat of rain.



More recently the Society was contracted by the Fremantle Cemetery Board to research and write 40 biographies from those who were buried there. This was to be a prelude to a cemetery heritage trail and booklet. Last month the Fremantle Cemetery Heritage Committee had its first meeting and those attending were given a powerpoint presentation of a heritage walk.

The walk will become a reality when the Minister for Local Government, Tom Stephens, goes on the first walk in mid June. This fast-breaking story and you will need to watch this space with regard to the cemetery booklet of biographies and other developments.



HISTORY COUNCIL GOES ON STREAM

David Hutchison

After extensive consultation with historians and history societies, to which the Fremantle History Society contributed from the start, the History Council of Western Australia was launched at an inaugural meeting at the Constitutional Centre, West Perth, on 19 March. More than 100 attended the meeting, including members of our Society.

The History Council will be 'the peak body representing history in Western Australia'. Its charter defines its purposes as an 'association dedicated to promoting the study, preservation and use of history as essential to the well-being of contemporary society'. It 'recognises Western Australian history as being enriched by diversity and acknowledges that Western Australian people are custodians of their own history'.

The Council 'will encourage the widest possible access to historical ideas and discussion of historical questions and controversies', will promote 'an ethical approach to the use of the past', and will uphold 'high standards of historical research, interpretation and publication'.

It is probably inevitable that the draft constitution of such a new body will attract some criticism. Several amendments were

discussed - none major - and the redraft was adopted at a subsequent meeting.

It is relevant that one of the issues raised was the dangerous precedent created by the Federal Government by its appointment of a committee to review the *aims and content of exhibits* at the new National Museum of Australia. The meeting passed a motion unanimously to ask the committee to monitor developments. Dr Jenny Gregory was elected the founding chair of the Council. The Fremantle History Society vice president, Kris Bizzaca, is a member of the Committee.

For Your Diary

Tuesday 27 May, Sound and Light Technology. Exhibition talk by Richard Rennie. **Fremantle History Museum, 6 pm** (note early starting time)

Tuesday 24 June, Fremantle Pilots, Captain Vince Nolan gives an exposé on the work of the Fremantle Pilots. **Maritime Museum meeting room, 7 pm**

Tuesday 22 July, AGM – Fremantle Boys (fmr) – FTI. Learn about this significant Fremantle building as well as being entertained by some historic footage of our port town. **FTI, Adelaide St, 7 pm.**

Fremantle Heritage Festival Events

Saturday, 31 May, 10.30 – 12.00 *Phillimore Street Tour* – meet at corner of Cliff & Phillimore Sts. Bookings 9361 9915

Tuesday, 3 June, 10.30 am Talk on *Those Empty Spaces* exhibition. Local History Collection, Fremantle City Library

3 – 6 June, 9.30 am – 5.00 pm *Those Empty Spaces* exhibition. LHC, Fremantle City Library

Sunday 1 June, 11.00 am – 12 noon – *A stroll in Fothergill St Precinct* - meet cnr Swanbourne & Fothergill Sts. Enquiries 9430 6096



Loretta O'Reilly
Local History Collection, Fremantle Library
P O Box 807
FREMANTLE 6160

